

LACDMH CO-HOSTS 9TH ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH AND AGING CONFERENCE
By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer



On Wednesday, January 14, 2015, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) partnered with several organizations and agencies to present the 9th *Annual Promising Practices: Mental Health and Aging Conference – Shaping the Future for Mental Health and Aging* at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles.

This year's conference committee and partners included LACDMH, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, Pacific Clinics, Providence Health & Services, San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc., and the Tarzana Treatment Centers.

Open to clinicians who work with older adults, more than 225 people attended this year's conference with a dozen agencies and organizations on-hand to pass out information about their programs and services.



The all-day conference began with opening remarks and an introduction of the key note speaker by Jose Salazar, Dr.PH. The morning key note, *Language of the Heart: Empowering the Dying & the Grieving*, was presented by G. Jay Westbrook, MS RN CHPN. The session was followed by morning breakout sessions (*Stories of Life: Enriching Lives and Enhancing Mental Activity in the Second Half of Life* – Cheryl M. Svensson, BA BFA MSG PhD; *Older Adult Substance Use Disorder* – Tricia L. Lethcoe, LMFT CATC IV; *Hoarding: Individual or Community Problem?* – Sheila Richman, LCSW and Marina Berkman, LMFT).

After lunch, attendees then listened to the afternoon key note speaker David I. Sitzer, PhD. Sitzer presented *Advances in Caregiver Support for Alzheimer's Disease: Reducing Caregiver Burden*. More breakout sessions followed his presentation (*Cultural Competency and Service to the Older Adult Latino and Middle Eastern Individual* – Tomas Martinez, PhD and Haydeh Fakhrabadi, PsyD; *Combating Chronic Loneliness – Digital Literacy, Social Media and the Aging Problem* – Maureen Feldman, MA; *Sleeping Your Way to Health and Happiness* – Melissa Sander, MSW). The closing session ended the day with *Yoga in a Chair* by Travis Kronenberg, a Dahn Yoga Instructor.

